

Madam Speaker, last week I voted against the so called ``Welfare Integrity Now for Children and Families Act of 2011," H.R. 3567.

H.R. 3567 would require states to prevent the use of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program benefits in a liquor store, casino, or strip club.

This bill is being disguised as one that would ensure taxpayer dollars are being appropriately spent. In reality, this bill is being brought to the floor to demean individuals who rely on TANF benefits and to imply that they are immoral.

It is ludicrous to suggest that there is a national problem necessitating that Congress stop TANF recipients from spending their money at strip clubs.

TANF is a long-standing program, previously known as Aid for Families of Dependent Children, that is one of the most important parts of our national safety net and that keeps almost 2 million families from the brink of starvation.

What is missing from this bill is any discussion that in many underserved neighborhoods, the closest ATM is located in one of these establishments. Preventing the use of TANF cards at these establishments could result in TANF beneficiaries not being able to access their benefits. Instead of debating how Congress could pass laws that would help with economic redevelopment in underserved communities, we are spending our time vilifying individuals receiving benefits and then sanctimoniously taking credit for preventing any misuse. This is part of the message of those who seek to demean the President by calling him the food stamp President.

Further, this bill would cost money--not save it. In New Jersey, it is estimated that this bill would cost \$100,000 to implement and Governor Christie's office wrote to express their concerns about the bill.

For a bill that is supposed to be ensuring that taxpayer dollars are being well spent, this bill would hinder individuals from obtaining their legitimate benefits and cost states more money. Every Member of Congress should have opposed this bill which was more offensive than silly. H.R. 1173 is another attempt by the Republicans to embarrass individuals who are on hard economic times instead of helping them find a job.

